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June 1985

APA-TECH # 36

The 555 Times # 36

The Amateur Press Association by and for the
members of General Technics (more or less)

Roxanne Shields

G.T. Buckfast (Editor): Donna Proni, 530 W. Walnut St., Kalamazoo, MI
49007 (616) 342-4967
Shalmaneser (Emergency Editor): now taking applications.....

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Rolf Wilson, Dean Anton Sherwood

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THE TRANSITIONAL CHAIR

I don't have the correct address for any of the following old members:
Kevin Dunn - Jon Singer - Kip Williams. Does anyone have the current
address for these folks? The recruitment letter I sent out was returned,
and I'd like them to know about the change in management in case they'd be
interested in rejoining. Thanks.

First of all, please check the roster everyone, and let me know if I've made any mistakes. Second, to make matters easy for all concerned, I am invoking the ever popular GENERAL AMNESTY for this issue. Hopefully this is the last time we will need to do that. Also, due to several problems which are probably inevitable in a case like this (the "last" apa coming out only a few weeks before the deadline; my changing the deadline to the 1st instead of the 10th causing confusion in at least one instance; and especially a comment ("I hope Donna will be generous about the deadline") from Rod), this issue is coming out a little later than I'd hoped. Due to the apparent confusion over the deadline date, I'll hold this up until the tenth, and I'll be passing it out to those of you who I see at Todd and Mary Lynn's beserker, and mailing the rest that Monday. I would like to note that the only contribution I had by the deadline from outside this house was Andy's, and that came on the first.

In the future I hope to stick to the deadline schedule once it is firmly established. As noted above the next deadline is August 1st. The next one after that will be October 1st, and that will start the new schedule of deadlines every three months (January, April, July, and October). This means that there will not be any "unofficial" deadline. If I have your zine when I write the Times, it will be included in that issue. Any zines I receive after the deadline will go into the next issue, unless you call and ask me to postmail it instead. If I have no zines by the deadline, I will send out just a cover and the 555 Times.

The above deadline schedule is what I came up with to try to save the apa. Hugh has proposed shortening the deadline to once every month or 1 1/2 months. If this is what you want, I'm willing to try it (I do lean towards the 1 1/2 month choice). Dean has also proposed a new set of rules - I'll let you read his explanation of it. Since we seem to have some different ideas on what to do about the deadline, I'll leave it up to you. The main choices are: a deadline every 1 month, every 1 1/2 months, every 2 months, every 3 months, or Dean's rules. Please let me know how you feel. If we all put in the effort, we'll all get the return: a good apa.

Please send in covers. I'm going to try to get a "generic" cover, and whenever I don't have a new cover, that's what I'll use, but I think it's nicer to have something new each issue. Covers will no longer count as minac - they will still count towards minac, as one page, but one cover will not make minac by itself.

I want to thank you all for being so considerate - I just know you guys all secretly voted on who would get to write for this issue, just so that I wouldn't be too overwhelmed by getting all your huge contributions at once. And really, I do appreciate it - but I do think I can handle a little more than just 18 pages of zines.

Seriously, folks, I know there wasn't much lead time for this issue, but I hope you'll all be sending me something for August. And if, for whatever reasons, any of you have decided that you no longer wish to stay in the apa, please drop me a line to let me know, and I'll take your name off the roster. I hope you'll all stay around at least for a while to see where we go (and to help us get there!), but if you don't, it's been nice seeing through these pages in the past, and you'll always be welcomed back in the future.

This is our sixth anniversary, and we've seen this apa go through quite a few phases. We've had some pretty small mailings, and a few huge ones. I'd like to see us get some more use out of that huge stapler we bought - it only works on the big issues folks. I've written a recruitment letter which I've sent to all former members of Apa-Tech, as well as to a bunch of other people to encourage them to join. I've also sent a copy of it to Jamie to put into Pyrotechnics. We'll see what kind of response we get - even if we only get a few more people it should boost our morale. If you know of someone who might be interested in joining but hasn't gotten my letter, let me know and I'll send them a copy of it. Let's work at staying around for another six years or so.

FINANCIAL NOTES

At this time, dues has been \$ 2.00 per year. It was charged to your account every year at the anniversary of your joining. I would like to change that to a single date for everyone. So unless anyone has strong objections, I'll make the dues date the anniversary of the apa. For members who join at other times during the year, their dues for the first year will be prorated accordingly. Renee has already prorated the dues of current members to cover her costs for the issues put out this year, so everyone now in the apa has an equal dues account (zero). I didn't take dues money out of any accounts yet, mostly because I don't have very many accounts set up yet. I'll be taking the dues out before next issue.

About "Those Who Owe Money"...so far I've gotten only 7 responses to my "do you want to stay in the apa" questionnaire. This means, among other things, that I've gotten money from Renee for these people and no one else. Therefore, you should either call Renee and ask her to transfer your account to me, or you should send me some money so I can start an account. Also, if you really don't feel you'd like to stay in the apa, I'd appreciate it if you'd drop me a line so that I don't keep asking Renee about the status of your account.

About "New Members"...you may have noticed that we have some new members, but that we don't have many new contributors. This means that these people have sent me money, but no zine. Money isn't enough (but it helps). You folks have to write stuff too. Perhaps it was partially my fault - I didn't send spec copies when I received the money (I didn't have any yet - Renee still has all the old issues). Hopefully next issue will see zines from Roxanne, Nikki, and Linda, as well as another contrib from Dean. Welcome to the apa. And welcome back Tullio and Rolf.

On the stapler issue - To be fair, I'll continue to charge new members the \$ 1.00 that other members have paid even after the stapler gets paid off. If, as has reportedly been the case in the past, the apa can't keep itself afloat, these extra dollars will be used to pay debts not covered by the dues account. If the apa does manage on the dues account alone, and there is a small amount of surplus money from dues and/or stapler payments, I will bring it to Worldcon (or NASFiC) and contribute to either an Apa-Tech party or the GT party. If there is a large surplus next year, I'll probably lower the dues amount, but I want to wait and see how the finances go first.

I'll hopefully see (read) you all next issue - don't forget, the deadline is August 1st. Until then, take care and be happy.

GTB

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A Few Words on the Philosophy of Teching

A zine for Apa-Tech # 36, written by Tullio Proni who resides at 530 W. Walnut St., Kalamazoo, MI 49007. (616) 342-4967

There has never been a formal definition of what a techie is. It is generally assumed that those in GT (itself a nightmare to define) are, would like to be, or feel an affinity towards techies. But the question of what a techie is, is usually answered by "I know one if I see one" or, in the old days, "if it blinks it's a techie". In a few words, while there is a general feeling as to what a techie is, there is no definition. Worse yet this "feeling" varies from person to person and time to time. What I propose to do here is to define the word by describing the qualities which I think the ideal techie would possess. This will lead to a definition which is biased by my opinion and is open to revision, but it will be a starting point.

First and foremost a techie loves technology. Some might think that this is too strong a word or that I am using it in the weak sense ("I just LOVE your dress"). Neither is true. The ideal techie truly loves technology in an emotional sense. He gets a rush from seeing a mighty rocket strain against the band of gravity, and rows of high power laser tubes send shivers up and down his back. He has been known to get misty eyed over metal machined to .00001 tolerance and is still awed by the induction of current in a wire by a simple magnet. His love is not jealous however - he wants to share it with everyone and that may lead to problems. Non techies fail to share in the excitement of the latest linear induction motor and extrusion techniques leave them cold. The techie is tolerant of them but does not let them suppress his enthusiasm.

The techie's love of technology differs from that of the science lover though. He wants to get intimately involved with science. It is not enough for him to witness the awesome might of a volcano. In

the back of his mind he is already laying pipe for a geothermal plant. And while he may be a lover of nature, when looking at a mountain stream he feels the urge to dam it and build a water wheel. And the true techie gives in to these urges. He does not only read about voice synthesizers, he builds them. While he is an avid reader, reading is never enough for him. He does not just read about the invention of gunpowder - he goes out and makes it. It doesn't really matter what the specific technology is, he wants them all. The actual real world techie is not equally capable in all fields, but deep down he wishes he were. So let us say that our ideal techie is truly a man of all technologies and all talents. In some ways he is like Heinlein's heroes - able to do everything from building a spaceship to building a tepee, though unlike them his competence does not extend to all areas of life.

But within the area of technology his hunger for knowledge is neverending, and merely knowing is not enough, he must do. To borrow from Heinlein again, he has a need to grok all that is technical. To do that he has to get his hands dirty - he must build, preferably with his own two hands, what he seeks to understand. If the object of his desire is beyond his time or financial resources then he must touch or at least see it. Therefore if owning a huge milling machine is out of the question, the next best thing would be to use it, or at least see the real thing. All techies have this desire to touch the object of their desire and to possess it. In that being wealthy is not necessarily part of being a techie, all techies, and especially our ideal techie tends to develop hoards of surplus equipment. This lets him touch and build from what others have cast off. In addition to getting around financial limitations, this fulfills his conservationist urge because our ideal techie is also a conservationist - a conservationist of technology. When he rescues a xerox machine from the local dump he is not merely adding to his hoard or gaining a new plaything - he is saving precious components which would otherwise be destroyed. They will now live again in the gadgets of his invention - the servo motors in a robot, the lens in a laser rifle, the high voltage supply in a pigeon repeller. Yes the techie

is a conservationist, but there is a darker side to this for he is also a hoarder.

Like the dragons of myth the techie develops a hoard. For a real life techie this may be a few drawers of electronic components or a few jars of chemicals, but in the case of the ideal techie this hoard is enormous. It contains everything from expensive machine tools and complete micro-etching facilities to the contents of choice dumpsters from coast to coast. And it grows because the ideal techie loathes to throw anything away. He will trade, but that does nothing to reduce the size of his horde, only changing its shape and anything used can be reused or must be kept as a sample. Thus like the dragon, the age of a techie can be gauged by the size of his hoard.

And like the dragon, the techie keeps his hoard in a cave. Well, maybe not an actual cave, though that is not totally out of the question, but maybe an abandoned missile silo or hydroelectric plant. The location should be underground if possible, or in some concrete structure, or both. The exact reasons for this are obscure but may have something to do with subconscious associations with alchemists, magicians, and even a certain Dr. F.

At this point one might think that our ideal techie is a superman (and in some ways he is), but he has failings also. Perhaps the worse is his onesidedness. He is able to fix a cyclotron with aluminum foil and masking tape, but is at a loss when trying to put on a tuxedo. Music is something to produce laser light shows with, and human relationships are somewhere between "illogical" and bewildering. Therefore he is rather isolated socially. Non-techies often don't understand and don't care about his interests and the feeling is mutual. But our ideal techie is not bitter about this. He is always eager to convert the "heathen" by word and deed (the latter as spectacular as possible). This occasionally produces a convert (new techie), but more often provides an avenue of social interaction between the techie and the outside world. But the techie's main social interactions are with other techies. This tends to isolate

them and is something of a failing.

Our ideal techie has some other failings also. First he is not overly good looking and considers his appearance to be secondary to the appearance of his gadgets. Second, he considers many social conventions such as which fork to use as total nonsense and as a result knows little to nothing about them. Third, he sees nothing wrong with speaking the truth, and politeness is not his strong suit. These are failings as viewed by society, but for the most part they do not bother our ideal techie.

So summing up our traits we come to the following definition of an ideal techie: A person who loves technology, knows technology, does technology, and accumulates technological artifacts to the exclusion of other facets of life. A real techie on the other hand only tends to do any or all of the above. He is neither as socially isolated nor as technically competent. He may have the urge to fiddle with gadgets more than he actually does, and his hoard may be small, but underneath is the same love of technology. It is this love that makes a techie.

IS FANDOM GETTING OLDER...OR YOUNGER?

Donna Proni's zine for Apa-Tech # 36. Written at 530 W. Walnut St.
Kalamazoo, MI 49007. (616) 342-4967

Is it just my imagination or are there more children in fandom? Does this mean that fans are getting older and therefore settling down, getting married and having kids, or do I just notice children more now that we're thinking about starting our family? Or are people just discovering fandom earlier in life than they used to (like around ten). If it isn't my imagination, why is this "generation" of fans having more children than previous "generations" (or did previous "fannish generations" end at the birth of a child, while now fans are bringing kids to cons with them)? Whenever I see other fans and especially other hucksters with small children, I start having nightmares. Trying to picture a worldcon with 10 or 20 people crowded around in front of our table, and a baby or two behind the table, is just about terrifying enough to make me really wonder if it's crazy to expect to continue going to cons once we start a family. We shall see...

It's kind of interesting seeing some of the new younger fans growing up. Since I'm a huckster, and especially since rayguns are such neat toys, I invariably see lots of kids at the table over the weekend. Some are designated (by Tullio) T.K. - twirpy kid. These are usually very young and are those who are constantly pulling 5 triggers at a time, and always seem on the verge of dropping a gun. But others, usually a little older, are nicer, and when asked to stop playing for a while they do, and either leave or talk to us for a few minutes. We've actually seen 2 boys go from the last stages of T.K., through the nice phase, and into paying customers. And now they always stop by the table to say hello (and to pull a few triggers). I think that's what I like most about being a huckster - people feel they know me because they always see me behind the raygun table, so they'll come say "Hi" and talk for a while. I'm even occasionally recognized away from the table - as Tullio's wife (just kidding). It's a nice way to meet new friends, but sometimes I have trouble placing these people unless I've seen them several times or at other conventions. But it keeps life interesting.

Well, I'll get the (rather short) mailing comments out of the way. It's kind of hard to comment on everyone saying goodbye, but hopefully we'll all be saying hello again real soon.

Cover - This was not a comment on the state of the apa. It was actually a drawing Tullio did for the start of our latest D&D campaign ("You Are Here"). Since it was just laying around and the right size, I decided to save Renee the agony of having to find that last cover.

555 - Obviously # 35 was not the last issue of Apa-Tech.//Renee - So long and thanks for all the issues.//Apa-Tech is dead - long live Apa-Tech.

Bonnie - How's your resolution doing?//I hope you'll be able to find the time to write for both Apa-Tech and Pyro (although admittedly I'm more concerned about writings for the apa at the moment).

Rod - I'll try to keep you from suffocating - for a while at least, the valve will remain open and the oxygen will still flow.

Jamie - Perhaps you can get a stapler for Pyro the same way we got the apa stapler - with as many people as there are (or should be) in GT, it shouldn't be much per person - maybe a quater. I have a catalog with a heavy duty stapler listed in it for \$ 32.88. It uses three different staple sizes - one for 30 pages, one for 70, and one for 100. If you want the address of this place, let me know.//If you discover you have extra time some day, I hope you'll rejoin.

Al - I tried your recipe (with the cheese cut in half and sausage added), and it was very good. It held together much better then any other time I've made pizza. I also have an osterizer, so I'll try making it with the dough hooks next time.

Guy - You described Christmas celebrations, but you started your zine with Happy New Year. Do they have New Year celebrations like we do?

Greg - It's kind of odd that during the one con we'll be at on your

side of the country (Baycon), you'll be at one on our side (Whatcon). Oh well, we'll see you at Austin anyway.

Have you heard about the latest vacation spot? For only one million dollars you'll be able to take a trip in the Space Shuttle - the trip lasting for one week, the training program beforehand lasting for six. You must be young and in good health. At least that's the idea some (I beleive) travel company is trying to sell to NASA. I caught the end of a segment on CNN about it. I'd sure like to go, but trying to save up a million dollars (actually two, since Tullio and I would both want to go) seems like dreaming the impossible dream. Maybe they'll have lotteries for the seats if they can't sell them at that price (of course, then we still have the problem of one ticket, two people). Are we really that close to everyday people getting into space?

The permanent space station (if it ever gets off the ground - in more ways than one) is another science fiction-soon-to-be-fact project. Can we hope that we'll start to see some significant progress in our reach for the stars? The Space Shuttle mission being launched tomorrow is full of scientific research. The reason given for taking up monkeys and rats is both to see how zero G affects them and also to test the cages they'll be in, because we'll need to take animals with us when we go to explore space. That statement tells me that at least one man with dreams of reaching the stars has gotten someone with money to listen. (That was one of my favorite lines in The Right Stuff "No bucks - no Buck Rogers".) Maybe there's hope yet, if someone's willing to put money into this research without expecting immediate results that they can sell.

We just got back from sunny California. All in all our vacation was pretty good. We flew United so we had some problems getting back (we had to pay twice our original ticket price to fly Continental) but that also meant we had to leave a day later than expected, so we had an extra sales day and that made up for it.

Baycon was interesting. They seem to run cons differently out there. On Friday, registration closed at 7:00. And all weekend the

con suite was only open at night. Also the con suite was a little small - two normal hotel rooms - for a con with 2000 people. The only parties were on the same floor as the con suite, and they were mostly bidding parties for the 1987 Westercon. The L-5 society also had a party room, and one other con - Fantasticon. The huckster room (oops...excuse me, cons are getting classy now - it's become the hospitality suite and the dealers room) had many different items. We met one guy who was selling belt buckles which he and his wife make. They cast them themselves, and told us they could cast some parts for us to lower our costs. We're going to send him some samples to see what he comes up with. GT was pretty well represented all things considered. Besides Tullio and I, Hugh was there, Gordon Garb, Matt Davison, Dave Levine (the other one), Phil Foglio, Chip Morningstar and Janice Johnson, as well as a few people who aren't in GT but should be - Andrew Mancuso the brass caster mentioned above (some of you may get to meet him - he wants to try to come to Ishercon this year), and also Rob, a friend of Hugh's who we met. The con was, all things considered, like the rest of our vacation - all in all, pretty good.

Congratulations to Todd and Mary Lynn on their wedding June 15. I'll try to have a beserker report next issue. Todd, Mary Lynn, I wish you peace, happiness and much love - be good to each other.

Well, that about wraps up another zine. Please write more - I'm beginning to get depressed at the lack of response, especially since most "farewell" contributions expressed some regret that the apa was no more. That's why I decided to give it another chance. C'mon folks, I know you care - get those fingers flying across those keys! I'll see you soon -

AN UNSUPPRESSED TRANSIENT (MAY'85)

by Andy A. Anda

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Hello again. You may have noticed that I once again have a Los Alamos address. I've been out here since the middle of February. And, as before, I'm working at The Lab. But this time I'm working for a new division, group, supervisor, and computer: I'm doing scientific programming, again in FORTRAN, but this time on a CRAY XMP, for the remarkable Mac Hyman in group 7 (computational mathematics and such) of the Theoretical Division. I'll be out here till August or so. The work I'm doing, in more detail, is the modification, documentation, etc., of a new unpublished software package (in subroutine form) which accepts previous iterates from a problem like a set of equations whose solution is to be converged to via some type of iteration process. This package spits back new optimized iteration parameters which will accelerate the convergence to the solution thus saving gobs of computer time for the larger problems. The mathematical theory upon which this package is based is the closest thing to mathematical sorcery I've ever seen and involves finding the smallest ellipse which encloses the eigenvalues in complex space which describe the problem. No I don't fully understand it either. But I muddle through.

By now you may have picked up my hints that I'm no longer in grad school at Northwestern. I guess I had to learn the hard way that I'm just not cut out to be an applied mathematician. I found that it was taking me longer than the other students to absorb the material and work the problems. Even though the others seemed to have a greater facility with the material, they were still working long hard hours; which left me with not enough sleep, not enough work getting done, and a great deal of anxiety. In my undergraduate schooling, I managed to get real good grades in math by taking at most two real bitch technical classes at a time, but at NU, I found myself with four of them, the result being that I had no freedom to borrow study time from one class to help myself in another. Ironical as it may seem, I have a much greater facility with the abstraction and manipulation of data structures and other programming related constructs than with classical mathematical reasoning though one might argue that those two mental operations should require rather similar mental reasoning pathways; perhaps algorithmic reasoning is a more lingual process than mathematical reasoning, and I never have been able to test higher in math skills than in verbal skills in those damnable standardized tests that crop up periodically in ones schooling. All I wanted to do at Northwestern was to get background for study in numerical analysis, but I found myself taking no numerical analysis and not touching a computer the entire quarter. I got the impression that in this department, "real men don't use computers." They have visions of Taylor series and delta functions dancing in their heads. The hot stinging slap of reality hasn't forced me to abandon my goals, but it has forced me to acknowledge that it may take me longer than I hoped to realize them. I think the operative phrase is "compromise, but not surrender." My next windmill will be graduate school in computer science. But, I'm not sure where

or when. I suppose that if, from the start, years ago, I had decided to do what I'm best at, rather than what I'm most interested in, I'd probably be doing pretty well for myself. But I'm obviously being driven by other Muses.

Until recently, almost all of my free time was consumed by one of my primary passions: downhill skiing. I had a season pass to the local ski area, Pajarito, and one could find me on the slopes from two to three times a week. The problem with such passion and zeal is that my top-of-the-line equipment began to fail frequently from the stress and fatigue I induced into it. Though there was still a good snowpack on the slopes from an unusually snowy spring, the ski season ended at the end of April. The season was ushered out by a sort of one-day festival called skiesta. One of the events at skiesta was a sort of masquerade contest. Not having a good costume, I needed a gimmick, so I donned some fairly funky, but functional for skiing, clothes and I skied down one of the easier hills while juggling three clubs. The judges were inordinately impressed and so awarded me with first place, the fools. If you doubt that New Mexico has abundant snow in April, talk to Bonnie; She and her mother drove my Ford Fiesta out to me in mid-april, for which I am eternally grateful. Within the vicinity of Los Alamos, they were beset upon by a severe blizzard which even had thunder and lightning. I'm sure that their descriptions of the event are much more colorful than mine would be.

Like the rest of you, I really shouldn't be taking the time to be writing this letter. But it's been much too long since I've written one of these things. I'll probably be busier tomorrow than I am tonight. E.g., Before noon tomorrow, I should do some work on my car, like changing the oil, and I should spend the rest of the morning practicing some music that's a bit over my head, in parts (like Vaughan Williams' Dona Nobis Pacem). At noon, wearing a suit and with my violin, I'll drive on down past Santa Fe to the little whistlestop train station at Lamy where my mother and grandmother will be arriving that afternoon for a one week visit. But I won't be waiting for them. I'll just be leaving the car for them to drive themselves when they arrive. Instead of waiting, I will be betting a ride up to Taos for the 4:00 rehearsal for the 8:00 concert by the Taos Chamber Symphony which, foolishly, I was talked into playing second violin for. Foolishly, I say, because I'm also playing second violin in the Santa Fe Community Orchestra. I'd probably be in the Los Alamos Synphonietta, were it not for it's meeting on my table tennis night (anyway, what fun would it be if I didn't have to traverse scores of miles of mountain roads in order to play?). With any luck, my family will be able to meet me in Taos for dinner before the concert. On Tuesday, the family and I will go white water river rafting in the Box Canyon. It should be quite exciting, since this is the best time of the year for that sort of thing, and since with the unusually large spring snow runoff, and all of the rain we've been having lately, the river is carrying the largest volume of water in a long time. The rest of the week will consist of my normal routine of working during the day at The Lab, while the family is off galavanting about Northern New Mexico. But at night, we'll be getting back together for another sampling of the terrific local cuisine.

In honor of my Fiesta's reaching 99K on the odometer, I finally got myself a radar detector. It can't be anything but raw unadulterated luck that has kept me from ever getting a moving violation. This new toy is a real beaut. It is a BEL 850 which is, for those of you for which this number doesn't ring a bell, a superheterodyne, non-passive detector disguised as a convex, wide panorama rear-view mirror. It finally came down to a reasonable

price, mail order. The sneaky thing has already justified its existence many times over in a rather short period of time.

One of the nice things about the Lab is the frequent presentation of talks which discuss exciting new topics before they are glossed over and misinterpreted by the popular press. The most exciting thing that's come along this year is the announcement that some people at the lab and some people at NASA have formed a working group to plan a manned mission to Mars for the turn of the century. Here's what's on the drawing board so far:

Crew of 6.

Spacecraft: constructed in Earth orbit.

rotating dumbbell shape, allowing for, as a function of radial distance, a variable artificial gravity of from zero to one third g.

Nuclear propulsion, but which type is not yet determined.

Substantial onboard power for instrumentation, etc.

Mission: Not a one shot deal, but an evolutionary scenario with multiple missions working towards a permanent presence on Mars. Some equipment would be left for subsequent crews.

Using a slingshot flyby of Venus, the roundtrip time will be roughly 600 days consisting of roughly 200x6 man-days (or woman-days--as Edward Teller pointed out, women tend to have more intelligence per pound than men) of research in transit, with 40x4 man-days of research on the Martian surface. Both Phobos and Deimos will be landed on.

Equipment supporting research will include: a scanning electron microscope; a surface rover having a 100km range; a remotely piloted aircraft having a payload of 100kg, and a range of up to 10,000km; and a substantial powersource for surface instrumentation.

Airbraking for deceleration and creation of return fuel for the return trip were also discussed.

Issues which are currently begging for input are: the contamination by Terran Biotes of the Martian environment; the power requirements for the mission, the total experimental mass; special crew training; special life support requirements; and instrumental needs. If you have suggestions, they should be addressed to J. Blacic, MS/C335, at The Lab.

Other non-mission related topics of astronomical import have also been discussed at the Lab. There is evidence for utterly massive fluid flows on the Martian surface--orders of magnitude worse than the most catastrophic terrestrial flooding that has come to current scientific notice.

One researcher talked at the Lab concerning evidence which he believes supports the theory that the Earth's moon once had a couple of massive primordial satellites of its own. He looked at crater patterns, maria, and magnetic data, and concluded that each time one of these satellite's orbits decayed sufficiently, they impacted on the lunar surface with a glazing blow sufficient to relocate the moment of maximum rotational inertia from the equator, with its newly reduced mass elsewhere. The result being an orthogonal drifting of the moon's axis of rotation.

Also, black holes have emerged as the most likely candidates for the generation of galactic jets. Kip Thorne and others at Caltech found the traditional Hawkings mathematics for describing a black hole to be too cumbersome for describing it's

interactions with the external universe, so they came up with a new formalism, or heuristic, which ascribes all of the physical properties of a black hole, such as charge, mass, gravito-magnetic field, etc. to the event horizon which appears to the external universe as a virtual surface. Of course, when the event horizon is breached, the observer sees a different reality. Well it was found that a tremendous electrical potential can form between the poles and the equator of the event horizon, thus providing a power source for the mechanism driving the astrophysical jets.

The new theory that a highly accelerated particle will observe that what a stationary observer sees as empty space, has a non-zero temperature caused by the spontaneous creation of particle pairs which only the accelerated observer particle sees. At least I think that's the theory, but I'm not sure. My information is second hand. This phenomenon is known as Heat Bath. Upon hearing of this, the science fiction enthusiast within me thought: WOW, a mechanism for quantum alternate universes, observable only when your acceleration is sufficiently intense.

Better Nuclear Winter simulations are tending to give a little more hope for the survivors than the original simulation. As I have privately expected, the new 3-D codes show very little soot and such getting across the equator. The oceans will be our salvation in the awful event. Also, hope its winter in the Northern hemisphere.

Cold dark matter has finally emerged as the top contender in the universal ~~snipe~~ missing matter treasure hunt. Cold dark matter usually implies some artifact of GUTS, i.e., the new unified theories of the universal forces. Cold dark matter is stuff that doesn't interact very much at all thermally with ordinary matter as we know and love it. CDM can be big rocks, string and plane faults in the fabric of space, exotic equation balancing particles from GUTS such as X particles, gravitinos, photinos, etc. It seems that the current state of fundamental particle physics cum cosmology is really science fiction which just happens to have a rather substantial projection into the plane of reality.

Now that nuclear matter has been shown to be compressible, the folks who blow up stars on computers have a whole new inning in the supernovae ball game, now that a degenerate core of nuclear density can rebound much more dramatically yielding a totally different shock profile.

Nothing new on wishy-washy neutrinos.

Around Labor Day, I'll either be in Austin or in Washington D.C. for my cousin's wedding. Hope to see you all whenever.

Interesting anecdote: a couple of days after I really hurt my foot running down a mountain trail using unstable running shoes, I, the gungho idiot, went with my purple swollen foot on a 13 mile hike in Bandolier National Monument. Luckily the only event besides beautiful scenery was coming within kicking distance of two full grown, meter-pluss long, pit viper type, rattlesnakes. Those things have gotten looking mean down to a fine art. Now what was that line in Raiders concerning snakes?...

Til next episode,

Good Night to all
A3

TRANSPORTER TOPICS

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Well, that was a short death. I hope this new arrangement works out, although three months between issues doesn't seem to be that much different from two.

Comments on AT #34

Permanganate Oress #4: I really like that cartoon, even though I have seen it before. About seals, I believe it was in Smithsonian a few years ago that there was an article promoting seals over dolphins for sea exploration partners.

THOIBTT: An interesting 'zine, Donna. Not much in the way of comment, except to say that the tow seem to have had some busy times.

General: I can see why Renee despaired; this issue was scrawney!!

Comments on AT #35

Renee: Speaking of Pyro, when is there going to be another issue? By the way, even though you are no longer Ye Editor, I am assuming that you will read and perhaps even contribute to AT. Assuming that the new arrangement works.

Donna: I thought that the Bermuda Triangle Con was a joke, but have since learned that it is legit. One detriment might be the number of fans who don't know that they are prone to seasickness. About AT, since we now have a copier that will do both sides, I will continue to send the whole contribution.

NO USER SERVICABLE PARTS: Well, you answered my question to Renee, above. The back yard now has a garden, shared by my sister and her husband. They live just up the street from me.

Guy: If you haven't recieved the Astronomy magazines yet, there's a good reason. I Haven't sent them! I have a small batch of post-1980 issues ready to go and promise that they will be on thier way shortly. Sorry about the delay, but they just got displaced by something more urgent every time they came to the top of the stack. Sounds like you had an interesting vacation.

Greg: I missed several issues of Aviation Week lately. Seems they didn't get my change of address notice, and when my COA arrangement with the Post Office ran out the issues which came in were returned. I got a letter from Av-Week a few weeks later asking me if I were still alive, and I told them (again) my new address. They still aren't sending me my issues. Looks like I'm going to have to write them a little letter.

MARCON

I have one preliminary question. Where was everyone? The only GTers I saw there were Steve Salaba and Paula Smith, from Isher, and Jeff Tolliver, who may not even still be a member. I thought, from previous experience, that Marcon was attended by a large contingent of our little group. Oh, well, I still got to meet and talk with a lot of people I knew from previous cons, both in Columbus and elsewhere. I had my camera along this year for the first time. (I only bought it last summer) and took 25 pictures of people and events. I didn't get any shots of the masquerade, since it was too crowded by the time I got there, but the contestants were lined up out in the hall and by standing there I got shots closer and with better lighting than I would have inside. Now that I think of it, there were also some friends who used to live in Lexington and moved to Columbus who weren't there, either, and they were last year. Some other friends from Lexington

(and who still live there) did come up, and we shared some time together. I like Marcon, even though it is basically a local con. There are some nice people attending and working the con. Unfortunately, it is a four hour drive from Frankfort, a drive which I have to make alone. Ah, well, such is the price we hermits pay.

Misc.

Well, it is the Tuesday after Memorial Day, and I am only on the second page. Part of the problem is that after the cancelation notice two issues ago I stopped making notes of things that I wanted to include. You will notice that there is only one reprinted item in this issue. If we can continue this I will resume noting things to include, but for the time being this contribution will have to be a little short.

After seeing the first issue of Phil Phoglio's Myth Directions comic I have been reading the original series. I have jsut finished the third book. Although funny and entertaining, it seems rushed. I guess that if you have the talent for this type of story you can jsut churn them out quickly, but I wish he wuoldn't. Actually, the funniest part of all three books are the "quotations" at the begining of each chapter. Light reading, but fun.

I believe that my cat is brain-damaged. He is the dumbest mamal I have ever met. He will jump up on a wall, lay down, and roll over, rolling off the wall! And he dosen't even land on his feet! He will just lay there for a moment, looking surprised, then jump back on and, likely as not, repeat his performance. It took him two months to lear how to use his cat door, and he still gets his tail caught in it every time. He showed up on my sister's front porch after being in a fight with something this past winter. He was half starved and badly injured. Apparently, the people who had been keeping him had moved and left him. My sister gave him a shelter and began feeding him, but she and her husband already have two cats, so she persuaded me to take him. In the three months since he has healed and gained weight. He no longer looks half-starved, but healthy and frisky. He is very friendly and playful, and has an excellant disposition. If only he weren't so dumb!!!

"The Universe Against Her", the first of the Telzey Amberdon novels, has recently been reprinted. I had read the first part as a short story in a collection several years ago, and finally have gotten to read the rest of it. I had the same experience with "The Witches of Kares". Makes one wonder how many other novels I have read only the short version of. At any rate, I reccommend the book, although it is not one of Schmitd's best. His mediocre is as good as many people's masterpeice.

Chester Gould died May 11. For those of you who can't place the name, he created Dick Tracey.

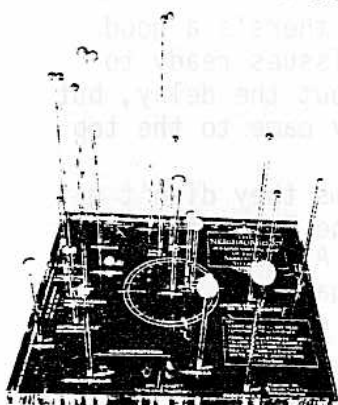
Theodore Sturgeon died May 9.

Another book I have read recently of "Hechee Rendezvous" Although I liked the first two books in this series very much this one fell flat. Too much repetition, too little plot for a novel this length. The Hechee themselves didn't impress me. A disappointment.

This is going to be late. I hope Donna will be generous about the deadline. I missed a day from work (where this is typed) and so the thing will probably not get there untill Monday or Tuesday.

I have had to go cold turkey on TV watching. My set is in the shop, suffering from horizontal collapse. The repairman said he is waiting for parts. I have only had it for six months, just long enough for the full warranty to expire. The store I bought it from is now out of business, and I had to take the set to another town. Ah, well.

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A VIEW FROM THE FUTURE - Rolf Wilson

Of course there are a lot of new things to talk about - I haven't written for Apa-Tech in something like 2 years. For a long time, I said that I was "waiting until I got my computer" because I really wasn't very good at writing letters, much preferring to use the telephone. Well, I got my computer in October 1984. And here it is May... Well, here goes with the good intentions.

May 22 this year was three years that Mary and I have been married. In June, we move into the fifth different place we will have lived. When we married, I lived in a one bedroom apartment of about 500 square feet. I did not fit into it that well all by myself, even having only a few of my books there. With Mary, it was downright silly. So we moved quickly, to a larger one bedroom apartment of 750 square feet or so. Marvelous - I built some bookshelves, and carted books in from my mother's house in Argenta. We bought a stereo (most people we know ended up with 2 stereos when they married - we had none) and a television (ditto) and a cabinet to put them in. By the end of a year, we had easily filled the apartment. So we moved to an identical apartment that had an extra bedroom - about 900 square feet total. I built more bookshelves, we hung more things on our walls and we ended up as crowded here as the last place. So this time we rented a small house, about 1100 square feet plus a cellar (I won't say basement - it has no interior access). We threw lots of junk in the cellar, brought in some furniture that had been in Argenta and had lots of room. Of course, we never stopped buying books, and I just built another set of bookshelves. We got a computer and a VCR. Bit by bit, we have filled up this place also - not as badly as before, but it has gotten inconvenient.

So this spring we decided to look for a house. Some of our friends in town were able to recommend a real estate agent, so we started looking almost at once. Some of our requirements caused problems. If the house is wonderfully light and airy, full of windows, it probably does not have enough wall space for 2 book collectors. Mary wanted a basement to put a table saw, etc. in - but she is quite allergic to mold and mildew. Sometimes she would take one or two steps down the basement steps, then turn around and leave. I could almost never smell anything, but we both have to live in this house. Of course, some basements were unsuitable for me because I could not stand upright in them. We ended up looking mostly at an older type of 2-story home instead of ranch style modern homes. That may have something to do with the fact that both of us grew up in homes of that sort. But we looked at over 30 houses without finding anything. For a short time, we thought we might buy a place that could easily be described as a rambling mansion. It had 7 bedrooms and seemed to go on forever. It needed much work, but it would have been cheap to buy, and I have the advantage of having a sister-in-law who is a renovation architect and a building inspector. But we found something we liked better, and bought it as soon as Rose (my multi-talented sister-in-law) told us it was sound. It looked better than the other things we had seen in our price range, and it was obvious it would sell very quickly. So, for over a month now, we have been the "owners" of a two story house at 611 W. Hill, Champaign. We can drive by and point it out to people, but we do not close on it until June 14 (which happens to be Mary's birthday - happy birthday!). The house is in an older part of town, the kind of neighborhood with brick streets and old-style street lamps. It has one odd point which we will have to fix as soon as possible - it is presently being used as an upper/lower duplex, and there is no inside connection between the first and second floors! We will have to put in about 3 vertical feet of stairs after knocking a hole in the wall. Once again, we will talk to my M-T S-I-L. I don't look forward to moving, but it is my hope that we won't have to do it again for a few years. This house has 2500 square feet plus a full basement, so we ought to have a few years grace before we fill it up. If we DO fill it up, we may just have

to change our habits - there aren't too many houses that much larger than this one.

Having friends with houses, I have some idea of how much time and money the upkeep of a house demands. But there are too many reasons we want one. Among them is the fact that I am widely regarded as a paranoid in the area of home security, and was so long before my apartment was burgled back in Michigan. Something in the back of my mind does not like the fact that we have a landlord who has keys to where we live. My sense of privacy is strong - I was less upset about the loss of my stereo than I was about the fact that someone had invaded my home. So, with a house of our own, we will put in steel doors with double-cylinder deadbolts and window security devices. Many people do not agree with me on this subject, but I do not try to convince them that they should. Mary is willing to grant me this peculiarity.

Other than househunting, the most outstanding feature of my life last fall through spring was mono. Some people get mono and are totally zapped for a month. I should have such luck. I never was totally useless, except over Christmas, but I was tired and listless for month after month after month. Actually, when they finally diagnosed me as having mono, my overall reaction was relief that there was a REASON for the way I had been feeling. I'm over it now - but 6 months without getting any exercise has left me in horrible physical condition, not to mention considerably over the weight I had been at. I'll work at it, and I may even have time now that I no longer sleep 11 hours every day. It really did get to be a drag, like the day when my car broke down and I had to push it several blocks to get it repaired, and it didn't want to roll very well. Of course, I was supposed to be avoiding any heavy physical exertion... If several people in a van had not stopped and helped, I don't think I would have made it. I felt helpless, and I didn't like it. For years, I have described myself as "disgustingly healthy" and always assumed that almost any illness I might have would go away in a day. Well, I can't say it any more. Sad.

Well, to be a little more organized (ORGANIZED?!) I read my journal for the last year to remember. Here's what I've been doing.

Starting with last June --- one day I got the bright idea of trying to vacuum some of the loose fur from our cat - I had heard of cats that liked to be vacuumed. Well, Patches is not one of them. I got many scratches and a bite, and I deserved it. Patches got thrown against the wall which she did not deserve. We ended up taking her to the vet to see if she was ok. I was quite frightened - I haven't lost my temper like that since I was 10 or so and tried to kill my brother with a thrown horseshoe. Well, if I can keep it down to once every 16 years...

Bill Leininger showed up unexpectedly to help us move. Moving is getting harder all the time. It ended up taking us a couple of weeks to get everything. The U of I will be keeping me at full time for at least another few months. Hooray.

We bought a VCR. I had planned on it for at least 2 years ago, so that I could watch almost all of the Olympics. I'm a track fan, and I do get somewhat annoyed at all the people who are track fans for 2 weeks every 4 years. Most of the television coverage of the events was terrible (with the exception of Dwight Stones). Their method of predicting an event seemed to be to take the top American and the top person in the rest of the world and call it mostly a competition between the two of them - even if it was an event where the top American wasn't one of the top 10 in the world! They spent millions to televise the Olympics - but I had vastly better information from my \$2.50 copy of "Track and Field News". I can put up with the blatant American bias - but they didn't even SHOW some events where no Americans made the finals!

I went to SIGGRAPH in Minneapolis in July with Bill Higgins. Of course, having the U of I pay for my hotel room helps. The annual film show is one of the most amazing things in the graphics world - and the real world. I've said it before and I'll say it again - THE GOLDEN AGE OF ANIMATION IS YET TO COME.

Apropos of nothing, we were driving about looking for Greg Ketter's bookstore when we stopped at a red light next to a bicycle repair shop whose window was lined with 2' plastic penguins. I yelled "Penguins!" and jumped out of the car to try to buy one before the light turned green (I have friends in Champaign who collect penguin knick-knacks, and yes, they have a penguin on their telly). As I was leaving the store, I asked why a bicycle repair shop sold penguins. The answer was that they had run out of pink flamingoes. Talk about impulse buying! We got to see a 32-player video game being run by David A. Levine - Ballblazer with 2 16-player teams whose joysticks all together controlled the action. Lots of fun, but how often will you have 31 friends over to play it?

Thanksgiving in July? Yes, every year. One year Mary was sick over Thanksgiving (in November) and could only eat jello while the rest of us had the usual goodies. So I promised her that we would have another Thanksgiving. So we have it in July - and we can get people to come who have other obligations in November. We will be doing it again this year, but I don't know what weekend it will be. If you would like to come - just let us know.

Mary has always wanted a second cat, and I said we could get one if we had enough room, like a house. So we have a new cat, gotten from a friend whose husband could no longer stand having two Persians shedding all over the house. His name was Pascha, but we changed it to Houdini after we found him in a locked basement, when we had left him in a locked house. By the way, there really isn't any connection between the two - not even cat-sized. He is a lazy friendly orange ball of fluff with a cat hidden somewhere underneath. Our present cat doesn't like him - but she has been known to hide in fear from tiny kittens. She'll get used to him.

Most people get compulsive about something now or then. Every once in awhile I go on a sharpening jag. I drag out the steel and the whetstones and nothing in the house with a cutting edge is safe. I once sharpened an axe blade so fine that it could be used to slice tomatoes. Which is all well and good, but when I swung it into the end grain of a stump, it stuck so deeply that I needed an hammer to tap it loose!

I bought a membership in a local fitness place when they were having a sale. I really did intend to use it regularly, and I was - until I had my case of mono. It has turned out to be one of the more useless expenditures I've ever made.

This fall, we bought a Britannica. I had sent in an inquiry many months before, and had forgotten about it. But finally a salesman showed up, and we bought one. The new one was too expensive for us, but they had substantial discounts on one from 1983. I tend to dislike most salesman, and do not like to be pressured - especially when we really WERE intending to buy. Of course, we don't have a bookshelf to put it on...

Tim Zahn won a Hugo this year, much to everyone's pleasure. He is a member of CHUSFA, the local SF group. Not that he comes to meetings, but he does take books out and comes by sometimes. We gave him an honorary life membership for "being the first person to win a Hugo DESPITE being a member of CHUSFA." He has had quite a few stories in Analog, and just recently has 2 more books, "A Coming Of Age" and "Cobra". I would have read something by a local author just out of curiosity, but I have been quite impressed by Tim's work. He writes well thought-out hard SF, which isn't really surprising because he was once a graduate student in physics. You might want to try some of his stories.

In October, I got my computer. A Macintosh, as some of you can tell by looking at this. Yawn - another Mac. I'm sure you've heard everything about them already. Fine.

Several old Hitchcock films have been re-released this fall, and we have gone to see them all. "Rear Window" should be seen by anyone who likes Hitchcock, and all of them are good. "The Trouble With Harry" wins the award for "most fun with a stiff" as Harry is buried and unearthened time after time...

My brother and sister-in-law are doing a lot of work on their house this fall. Reshingling the roof and adding an addition - it all takes a lot of time. So almost every weekend it rains, and we sit inside and watch it pour. Meanwhile, the roof is missing the old shingles. To keep the rain out, it has been wrapped in huge sheets of plastic. Remember the house in ET? You get the idea.

In November, I was going up to Rochester to see Dave Marquart and his fiancée Tammy. Of course, this was before my car died in the middle of Demster in the Chicago suburbs. The 8 mile hike back to Bill Leininger's apartment wouldn't have been so bad if it weren't for the 20 pounds of backpack and the cold weather. Of course, if I had been better informed, I would have known that I nearly walked past Alcar, where Bill works. Oh well. Actually, I felt fortunate. My car breaks down, and where am I? In the middle of a city where I have plenty of friends to visit. I never did make it to Rochester.

In January, I call a call from a company in the Chicago area who wanted an Macintosh expert. The salary they offered was absurdly high, so I went and talked to them. Later that week, on one day of notice I flew to California to their main headquarters to talk to some people there. This involved getting up at 4:30am in Urbana to make all the connections. By the time the day was done, I didn't even eat dinner - just slept. I ended up not getting the job, but perhaps it is just as well. They would have wanted me to wear a suit.

Did you know that there was a Dr. Who convention in Champaign in February? Probably not - not many people heard about it. So the local Dr. Who club who put it on took a terrible financial beating - the speakers fees for Colin Baker and John Nathan-Turner were rather high.

While attending an autograph session for Tim Zahn, I learned something that astonished me. For the last 4 years, there has been a used book store in Argenta! Now remember, Argenta is the muddy spot in the cornfields where I went to school. I never would have dreamed of anyone putting a book store there. Actually, it isn't in Argenta. It's about 3 miles away - in a barn. The Old Book Barn, with 100,000 books. You might even have seen it in your newspaper - there was an AP photo of it recently. But this year the Barn is going out of business. It wasn't losing money, but it was taking up too much time for the owner. So, everything went on sale. The weather was just getting nice enough for it to open (no heat in the barn) so 3 of us made an appointment and went out one night. We were there for 4 hours, scanning the shelves with flashlights in some places where there weren't any other lights. The very idea of the place tickles my fancy - a perfectly ordinary barn out in the middle of Illinois farming country, stuffed with books. Of course, we also managed to pick up about 125 books of various sorts in 2 visits.

In the last year or so, I developed some interest in genealogy and tracking down some of my distant relatives. The reason was that a relative I had never heard of died and left some land which may be divided among quite a few people. I know it sounds like a bad piece of fiction, but it actually can happen. So I may end up getting a small fraction of a farm - a "bucket of dirt". If nothing else, it has been instructive to make a computer plot of my entire family. I produced a nice chart on a pen plotter, about 8 feet long. You see, my great-great grandfather had 10 children....

I've known several people who have had interesting phone numbers (ie: the letters spell something) Mine never have. So, I wrote a computer program to scan an on-line dictionary for all words that matched the phone number prefixes in Champaign. They are holding 359-7486 for me, which spells ELYSIUM

E-ly-si-um n. 1. Also, Elysian fields. Gk. Myth. the abode of the blessed after death. 2. Any similarly conceived abode or state of the dead. 3. any place or state of perfect happiness. Well, definitions 1 and 2 seem to require you to be dead, but 3 is about as perfect a word as I could ask for.

Some day my Text will come : Or maybe I will be just a few
days to late for Apa-Tech.

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Hello long lost friends, I and Apa-Tech keep going through trials and tribulations. It has been about one year since something I wrote has made it into Apa-Tech, although two and one half contributions are sitting on tape. The reason that I havent gotten anything in is that so much keep changing and happening to me that a lot has fallen through the cracks.

As it is Sunday June second I have no hope of getting a real contribution written up, but I want to at least give a quick accounting of the (neat) stuff I have been up to and talk about the next incarnation of Apa-Tech.

Triping:

About a month after the Worldcon (LAcon II) I did some real soul searching and ended up leaveing Project Xanadu. I someday (soon) hope to do the things that Xanadu was all about but our group was going nowhere real fast and I wasn't learning a thing. That and the only thing I was getting paid in there was negative mental dollars.

After that I returned to random consulting, and ended up going to New York City just after thanksgiving. There I was helping a startup company that wanted to do a Xanadu Front-end. Liveing in NYC for a month was a real trip, but I wouldn't do it again(for that long).

In mid January I flew to my homeland of Ann Arbor to work with Marcus Watts and NETI. Marcus is a friend who wrote a computer conferenceing system that NETI bought and is marketing. While in Ann Arbor I made it to Confusion and even was able to spend a few days in Chicago Land and also made it to Capricon.

Oh the way back from Chicago I was even able to stop in Kalamazoo and see everyone there.

In mid march I returned to the Bay, and have been here since.

At the beginning of May I convinced the Whole Earth people that they needed my help on there computer conferenceing and services project called the WELL. More about the adventures of Hugh Everywhere latter.

Apa-Tech:

It has been proposed that we go to only three or four ishues of Apa-Tech a year, because we don't have much to say and are far apart. I think that this is the wrong approach, what we need is MORE communication. What I think we ought to have is Monthly or 1 1/2 monthly Apa-Tech contribs. Even though this would be more work for the OE (Donna) it would mean that a mised due date would not be a disaster, another one would come soon, Soon enough that it would still be timely to get it done NOW. The ishues would be smaller but more pertinent and we would have more give and take type things.

For me if Apa-Tech had been a monthly over the last year I would have been able to put in several contribs, as anytime I wrote something it could have gotten in to a ishue within a few weeks. Also I just don't have enough discussions going on continuously with you folks. So even for a delinquent like me I think it would be better.

I must mail this off, It was great to see every one who I could, and I hope to see you all again. Have Fun!



THERE IS ALSO SHEEMISH #0 for APA-tech

Dean Anton Sherwood, 3107 School Street, Oakland 94602; 415-JEDI-KNT.

I notice I have some blank space at the bottom, so a quick intro: I graduated from UI-Urbana (where I was locally active in ChUSFA) in 1981. I went to California to be a programmer, and joined LASFS, APA-L, LASFAPA. In 1984 December I got laid off, moved north with my lovely & talented, and have ever since been looking for some place that doesn't care that I wasted the last three years working on Z80s.

I've never seen a copy of APA-tech, so all I know about it is what I hear from Hugh Daniel.

Hugh tells me there's a move on to change APA-tech from a bimonthly to a quarterly, in the hope that this will encourage activity by taking some pressure off. I agree with him that this is a bad idea. I belong to a few apas -- a weekly, a monthly, and a bimonthly -- and I find that a lag of two months is already too long to maintain interest.

No, instead of changing the timetable (unless you want to shorten it), I suggest changing the minac rule.

What follows comes from the rules of the **Hypothetical APA** that I haven't yet gotten around to starting. (Is there a place in fandom for a mathematical apa?)

- Each member of HyAPA has an **activity account**, which is initialized at zero. The sum of all AcAc's can be called the **Bank**.

- At the time of a collation, each AcAc is divided by the **decay ratio** and then incremented by the number of pages contributed to this issue.

- Each member whose AcAc is at least equal to the Bank divided by the **copy count** has fulfilled the minac requirement, and is entitled to a copy (assuming other rules are satisfied, i.e. dues paid and whatnot). Other copies may be sold.

What all this means: The behavior of HyAPA is governed by two constants, the Copy Count and the Decay Ratio. Minac is not fixed, but depends on the level of interest: either a chronic reduction in pagecount or an increase in Copy Count will reduce effective minac, which encourages new contributors, which increases pagecount, which increases minac ... good old negative feedback!

I would recommend a Decay Ratio (R) no greater than 2. (I'm fond of phi [the golden ratio, $(1+\sqrt{5})/2$] partly because it would let all the bookkeeping be done in integer arithmetic.) A low R recognizes the fact that each contribution leads to responses and hence influences pagecount for some time; so regular contributors aren't obliged to do something for every deadline -- taking away the motive for changing the schedule.

So much for my first visit to APA-tech. I've been wanting to join a techie apa. APA-tech isn't listed in SOUTH OF THE MOON; why not?

